

AMENDED IN ASSEMBLY MARCH 25, 1999

CALIFORNIA LEGISLATURE—1999–2000 REGULAR SESSION

**ASSEMBLY BILL**

**No. 611**

**Introduced by Assembly Member Cardenas**

February 19, 1999

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An act relating to healing arts.

LEGISLATIVE COUNSEL'S DIGEST

AB 611, as amended, Cardenas. Prenatal health: information dissemination.

Existing law imposes various functions and duties on the State Department of Health Services with respect to maternal, child, and adolescent health.

This bill would require the department, ~~by January 1, 2001,~~ to review the adequacy of prenatal nutrition information available to physicians, *nurse practitioners, physician assistants, and nurse midwives* providing healthcare to pregnant women and report its findings to the Legislature by *January 1, 2001*.

*The bill would also require the department to conduct, or contract for the conducting of, an assessment of all department-funded programs serving pregnant women, or women of child bearing age, or both, to determine the efficacy of current educational efforts targeting women regarding prenatal nutritional information and any programmatic barriers limiting access by pregnant women to healthy foods and vitamins, and report its findings to the Legislature by January 1, 2001.*

Vote: majority. Appropriation: no. Fiscal committee: yes.  
State-mandated local program: no.

*The people of the State of California do enact as follows:*

1 SECTION 1. (a) The Legislature finds and declares  
2 all of the following:

3 (1) Prenatal nutrition has been proven to have a direct  
4 relationship to fetal and maternal well-being, affecting  
5 infant mortality rates and infant health, as well as the  
6 health of older children.

7 (2) According to the American College of  
8 Obstetricians and Gynecologists, nutritional experts  
9 advise that proper nutrition can best be attained through  
10 a well-balanced diet.

11 (3) Furthermore, women who cannot achieve a  
12 balanced diet based on economic or physiological  
13 constraints are encouraged by their healthcare  
14 professionals to take prenatal vitamin supplements.

15 ~~(4) However, prenatal vitamin supplements may be~~  
16 ~~very expensive, so that not all pregnant women can afford~~  
17 ~~them.~~

18 ~~(5) These findings support the need to disseminate~~  
19 ~~nutritional information to pregnant women.~~

20 ~~(b) The State Department of Health Services shall,~~  
21 ~~therefore, review the adequacy of prenatal nutrition~~  
22 ~~information available to physicians providing healthcare~~  
23 ~~to pregnant women, and shall report its findings to the~~  
24 ~~Legislature by January 1, 2001.~~

25 *(4) According to a recent survey by the Office of*  
26 *Women's Health, fewer than half of women surveyed*  
27 *reported weight gain within their recommended range.*  
28 *Women with inappropriate weight gains have either an*  
29 *increased risk for prenatal mortality (below range) or*  
30 *birthing problems (above range). Additionally,*  
31 *California women are less likely than women in a national*  
32 *survey to have heard of folate and its importance for the*  
33 *prevention of birth defects. This suggests a need for*  
34 *educating California women about the importance of*

1 folate, particularly Latinas and women 18 to 29 years of  
2 age, and its role in the prevention of neural tube defects.

3 (b) The State Department of Health Services shall do  
4 both of the following:

5 (1) Review the adequacy of prenatal nutrition  
6 information, including use of folates and prenatal weight  
7 monitoring, available to physicians, nurse practitioners,  
8 physician assistants, and nurse midwives providing health  
9 care to pregnant women, and report its findings to the  
10 Legislature by January 1, 2001.

11 (2) Conduct, or contract for the conducting of, an  
12 assessment of all department-funded programs serving  
13 pregnant women, or women of child bearing age, or both,  
14 to determine the efficacy of current educational efforts  
15 targeting women regarding prenatal nutritional  
16 information and any programmatic barriers limiting  
17 access by pregnant women to healthy foods and vitamins,  
18 and report its findings to the Legislature by January 1,  
19 2001.

